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The Causes and Consequences of Gangland Violence in the Republic of Ireland

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Abstract

While the Republic of Ireland is a relatively peaceful country, with a homicide rate significantly lower than the global average, it has experienced a number of violent feuds between criminal gangs. This chapter will explore the consequences and causes of these gangland feuds. While gangland feuding is often identified as a form of systematic drug market violence, this chapter argues that the roots of feuding can be found in a historical context of colonialism combined with the contemporary decline in traditional working-class jobs, at a time of increased pressure to exhibit the trappings of the financial success of the family. It is argued that feuding is concentrated in small pockets of economically disadvantaged urban areas where alternative sources of income are, or were, scarce and violent subcultures have emerged. The second half of the chapter identifies some of the significant psychological, physical and social harms which have inflicted family members involved in the feuds, local communities and the Republic of Ireland itself. It has been suggested that the long-term impact of these feuds may be felt when children who are raised in these contexts, experience multiple forms of trauma, and grow into adults themselves in the absence of pro-social supports.

Keywords: Feud, Dublin, Illicit drug markets, Limerick, Transnational Feud

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Introduction

> This is a dispute between two families. It is a vicious, murderous dispute and I don't think that I can stop that (Enda Kenny, cited RTE 2016).

This remarkable quote is from the then Taoiseach (Head of Government) to the Dáil (Parliament) in response to a daylight murder outside a block of Dublin flats. The murder was connected to a long running feud between local gangs (RTE 2016). While the former Taoiseach later clarified that he meant that there was nothing he could personally do to stop the feud, it illustrates the frustration and impotency felt by many citizens of Ireland and those in government around gangland feuding.

Gangland feuding is a key political and security issue in Ireland. In May 2018, Assistant Commissioner Pat Leahy, of *An Garda Síochána* (the Republic of Ireland's police service), reported that there were three ongoing gangland feuds in Dublin alone (Lally 2018). These three feuds are the most recent in a relatively long list in which many lives have been lost and which can severely hamper the quality of life of residents of areas experiencing feuding.

This chapter will explore the consequences and causes of these gangland feuds. The chapter shows how feuding -- often identified as a form of systematic drug market violence -- in the Republic of Ireland has historically been concentrated in small pockets of economically disadvantaged urban areas where alternative sources of income are, or were, scarce and violent subcultures have emerged. The following section provides a brief introduction into Irish illicit drug markets for context. Three case studies of feuding gangs in Ireland will then be discussed before some causal factors explaining feuding are offered. The chapter concludes with a review of the consequences of gangland feuding.

The Irish Drug Market

Illicit drug consumption had been limited in Ireland until the late 1970s, when heroin was introduced to the urban working-class areas of Dublin. The increased consumption of heroin, during the late 1970s/1980s was facilitated by a convergence of national and international developments. First, heroin (and other drugs) became cheaper and more readily available from the late 1970s, a consequence of geopolitical changes in South Asia at a time when technological innovations were making it easier and cheaper to import larger quantities of drugs (Windle 2016, 2018a). Second, as has been reported in other countries (Schneider 2008; Stevens 2011), heroin consumption tends to cluster in socially excluded communities: Ireland was experiencing a prolonged economic recession and consumers were attracted to a new drug that allowed them to "black out" the hopelessness and exclusion they were experiencing (Punch 2005). Third, Mulcahy (2002) argues that there was significant official indifference to the spread of heroin in Dublin; primarily because it was confined to these marginalized communities. A final, related factor is that drug dealers and traffickers were able to capitalise on a policing vacuum created by a succession of Irish governments diverting police resources from urban areas to the Northern Irish border during the "Troubles" (Conway 2014). This re-distribution of policing resources may have limited the perceived risk to dealers, further reducing the price and increasing the availability of heroin and other drugs.

As the 1980s progressed, illicit drug markets developed in other Irish cities, such as Cork, Limerick and Galway. Limerick's extensive sea- and air-port infrastructure made the city a particularly important hub in the national drug trade (Hourigan et al., 2018). While the city of Cork is equally as important a transportation and freight hub, it witnessed a fraction of the violence of Limerick. A difference between the two cities is that Limerick-based traffickers and wholesalers were able to exploit their dominant position in the cities socially and economically disadvantaged communities to protect their distribution networks
(Hourigan 2011).

The Irish drug market expanded further during the 1990s as the "Celtic Tiger" economic up-turn inflated demand amongst the middle classes for ecstasy and cocaine (Connolly and Donovan 2014; Hourigan et al., 2018; Windle 2018a) at a time when the further global integration of Ireland opened new illicit trade opportunities. Consumption and trade of most drugs declined during the

"Great Recession" of the late 2000s, primarily due to the migration of between 10-15 percent of the youth population. However, heroin consumption and domestic cannabis cultivation increased significantly during this period. The rise in cannabis cultivation followed a global trend towards import substitution (Windle 2018a).

Ireland is primarily a destination market for illicit drugs, although there is a long history of traffickers using the country to tranship drugs to Britain. This is partly because Southern Ireland's rugged coastline makes it difficult to control (McDonald and Townsend 2007) but also because close family and ethnic ties ensure significant levels of co-operation between traffickers based in Ireland and the U.K., and increasingly elsewhere in Europe (Hourigan 2011; Hourigan et al., 2018; McDonald and Townsend 2007).

The importation and wholesale distribution of drugs remain dominated by Irish nationals linked to actors with access to source and distribution hub countries, such as Spain and the Netherlands (Connolly and Donovan 2014). Many senior Irish traffickers operate from Spain, directing minor gang members -- generally part of their extended family -- to administer routine drug distribution within Ireland (EMCDDA 2016; Lally 2016). Recent intelligence suggests that Irish traffickers have developed strong links to South and Central American trafficking networks to facilitate the direct importation of cocaine to Ireland or transhipped through Africa (EMCDDA 2016). There are also, however, reports of Eastern European gangs securing a significant market share of some heroin markets (Burke 2018).

Violence in Irish Drug Markets:
Systematic Violence, Debts and Contagion

Several commentators have argued that Irish drug markets were relatively peaceful until the 1990s when competition between drug dealers created an upsurge in homicides. A trend which increased further during the early/mid-2000s (Connolly 2006; Kilcommins et al., 2004; Loughran and McCann 2006; O'Donnell 2005). For example, Enda Dooley (2001) found that 15 of 205 (approximately seven percent) of homicides committed between 1992 and 1996 were categorised

by An Garda Síochána as conflicts over drug markets. Shane Kilcommins and colleagues (2004, 129) and Ian O'Donnell (2005), drawing on data from a Sunday Post newspaper article, suggested that the number of gangland murders had increased to one third by 2003.[1]

Irish researchers have hypothesised several situational factors for this upsurge in systematic violence. For Connolly and Donovan (2014) the increase in general violence within Irish drug markets centres on three factors: the first, a greater willingness by dealers to provide drugs on credit and second, the seizure of drugs by the police. Both relate to the perceived need to enforce debts accumulated by those lower down on the supply chain. The third factor was a contagion effect in which conflicts escalated as more people are drawn into conflicts.

Murphy and colleagues (2014) have additionally attributed the upsurge in homicides to the increased possession of high-velocity firearms beginning in the early 2000s. This reflects trends documented in the US (Wintermute 2000). An additional explanation, presented in this chapter, is that socio-economic and culture factors, coupled with the structure of Irish drug trafficking networks, help explain both the origin and dynamic of feuds. The following sections will present three case studies of the most well-known and prevalent feuds before presenting a more in-depth and multifaceted assessment of the causes of feuding, within a historical context.

The Feuds

Considering the obsession of Irish politicians and the media with organized crime, it is surprising that there are very few academic studies of this phenomena. Niamh Hourigan's (2011) ethnographic study of organized crime in Limerick, Bren Marsh's (2017) ethnography of drug dealers in Dublin and Johnny Connolly's (Connolly 2006; Connolly and Donovan 2016) various studies of local drug markets represent the extent of empirical research on Irish organized crime and higher-level drug dealing. As such, much of the knowledge of Irish drug trafficking comes

[1] While there is little doubt that drug related homicides did increase, as supported by qualitative observation (see Connolly and Donovan 2014; Loughran and McCann 2006), Dooley's data should be approached with caution. The study reported Gardaí perceptions of systematic violence and, police perception do not always reflect the reality of drug markets or gang violence (Windle and Briggs 2015). While police data does represent a good starting point for any research (Windle, 2018a) it can be distorted by numerous economic, political and institutional factor (Windle, 2018; Windle and Silke 2018; see McCullagh 2011).

from media accounts, especially "true crime" books. While useful when triangulated with other sources, such documents tell a partial story and lack the analytical sophistication of scholarly work (Windle and Silke 2019).

The Limerick feud described below draws primarily from published ethnography research by Niamh Hourigan (2011). Hourigan's study -- which represents the most comprehensive, and nuanced, description and explanation of feuding in Ireland -- is based on approximately 100 hours of participant observation and 221 interviews with residents, peripheral gang members, *Gardaí* and social, community and youth workers.

There is currently no academic research into the two Dublin feuds discussed below. As these feuds have been well documented in the Irish media, this is our primary source. As crime news is often based on police or court press releases, or underworld informants, it can represent a convenient conduit between the researcher and underworld or criminal justice system (Fijnaut 1989). However, while most organized crime research continues to rely on media or government documents (Windle and Silke 2019), we must be cautious of relying too much on the media for information. As Jewkes (2004, 37) warns, the "media is not a window on the world, but a prism subtly blending and distorting our picture of reality." Indeed, reporting of organized crime can be heavily influenced by works of fiction, and use exaggerated terms and images which are familiar to the readership, yet may distort the activity or structure of organized crime (Antonopoulos 2008; Windle and Silke 2019). As such, while the details of the feud described below represent a good starting point, a deeper understanding will require more systematic and objective primary research.

The South Dublin Feud

The first feud centred upon the two inner city suburbs of Dublin between 2001 and 2009 (McCaffrey 2011). The feud involved a split within one gang involved in the wholesale and retail distribution of drugs. In 2000, two gang members were arrested and the Gardaí seized a large quantity of cocaine and ecstasy. Rumours of police cooperation caused a split in the gang[2] and a leading member of one faction was stabbed to death by a former friend, now aligned with the

[2] This case lends strong support for Connolly and Donovan's (2014; also Werb et al., 2011) argument that violence can be an unintended outcome of law enforcement success.

opposing faction. Retaliation followed seven months later when the leader of the opposing faction was shot in his home. While he survived, his younger brother was later shot dead. Over the next eight years another 14 people were murdered in connection with the feud, and many more injured in shootings, beatings and bombings (Brady 2009; Cusack 2013; McCaffrey 2011).

The Limerick Feud

Another major feud centred upon a small number of housing estates in Limerick. An argument between two gang members' children is believed to have escalated into an attempted murder in 2000. The would-be assassin was later murdered and his family joined forces with another local crime family (McCullagh 2011; O'Brien 2013). Some members of the feuding families, however, identify events going back as far as the early 1990s as the spark of the feud. The feud resulted in up to twenty murders as well as many shootings, kidnappings and pipe bomb attacks in the city. The feud also provided an excuse for local crime families to extend their hold on local communities where the four gangs used an extensive surveillance apparatus to exert significant control over the local population (Hourigan 2011).

The Transnational Feud

The third feud drew in people from the north inner city and a southern suburb of Dublin; however, several of those involved in the feud were living and working in Spain and elsewhere. This feud is believed to have started in September 2015 and, according to Assistant Garda Commissioner Pat Leahy, head of the Dublin Gardaí:

> This was a single gang imploding, these were never two separate groupings. And they've known each other for years… They have intimate knowledge of each other because they were all part and parcel of the same grouping. They're family, they're relatives. (Reynolds 2018, also Hilliard 2017)

The spark was the murder, in Marbella, of the nephew of the suspected patriarch of one of these gangs (Calnan 2016). Five months later, "an associate of" one of the gangs was assassinated in a brazen attack, at the Regency Hotel in Dublin, during a public boxing weigh-in (Calnan 2016). Men dressed in Gardaí uniforms stormed the hotel with assault rifles. The assassination was

described in court by the prosecution as a "resourced, carefully planned, targeted, murderous attack" (Hickey 2018). Two days after the Regency shooting, the brother of one of the gang leaders was murdered at his home in Dublin (Calnan 2016). Two of his nephews were later murdered (Schiller et al., 2016; Rosengrave 2018). As of January 2018, 18 people are suspected to have died as a result of the feud (Foy 2018). The Garda operation to counter the feud has resulted in the seizure of 456 firearms, €2.2 million and €64 million worth of drugs (Hilliard 2017).

The Causes of Feuding in Ireland: Systematic Violence, Money and Familial Criminal Capital?

Some academics, journalists and politicians have suggested that all three feuds centred on competition for drug market shares. That is, they are seen as examples of systematic violence. Systematic violence being the interaction of individuals "working or doing business" within an illicit market (Goldstein, 1985, 116). Paul Goldstein (1985) identifies systematic violence as that conducted by rational entrepreneurs operating in markets without legal protection or avenues of recourse for dispute resolution mechanisms.

In general, O'Donnell (2005) and Kilcommins and colleagues (2004) have suggested that the upsurge in homicides from the 1990s was primarily an outcome of increased competition between drug dealers. Henry McDonald (2016), writing for the British Guardian newspaper, suggested that this "Transnational Feud" began as:

> A vicious tussle for control of the vast fortune to be made by importing drugs from South America and Asia via Spain into Ireland and, ultimately, Britain.

Archbishop of Dublin, Diarmuid Martin, has referred to the feud as linked to "a multi-million-euro business of death called the drugs trade" (in MacDonald 2016). Jim Cusack (2013) described the South Dublin gangs as "rivals in the local drugs trade." Councilor John Cronin, a former mayor of Limerick, is quoted: "There are gangs because of the drugs. The feuding is over control of the drug

trade" (in Bowcott 2007). The Minister for Justice stated in 2007, in response to the Limerick Feud: "the drug and gun culture are inextricably linked" (in Lally 2007). Hourigan (2011) has identified an attempt to monopolise illicit drug markets as the spark to the Limerick Feud, whilst noting that the feud pre-dated the drug trade with many key players rising to underworld prominence because of violent reputations cultivated during earlier feuds.

The feuds *may* represent an extreme example of systematic violence; however, if media reports are correct, the core actors in all gangs were successful traffickers and wholesalers. These three feuds as systematic violence would, therefore, conflict with a literature which tends to depict wholesalers and traffickers as rational actors who are mindful of the personal risk and negative commercial consequences of violence (Caulkins et al., 2006; McLean forthcoming; Pearson and Hobbs 2001). Indeed, as Adler (1985) and, Pearson and Hobbs (2001) have argued, for many traffickers and wholesalers, the threat of violence is often more prevalent than actual violence.

While the rationality of traffickers is the most often cited reason for their lack of violence, situational factors may also play a role. For example, traffickers tend to engage with fewer customers, and conduct less transactions, than wholesalers and retailers. As such, there are fewer opportunities for theft or fraud, which should reduce the need for violent responses to a grievance. While traffickers do get robbed and defrauded by customers (Adler 1985; Windle 2013, 2018), this can represent a poor business strategy. The development of a relatively honest and reliable reputation is good for business (Windle 2018); dishonest and unreliable reputations can reduce a customer's buying power whilst cutting their ties with the supplier, "the most strongly coveted of all drug world connections" (Adler 1985, 70).[3] One would think that this would be especially true in small national markets.

While the systematic violence hypothesis understands dealers and traffickers as rational entrepreneurs, the line between enterprise and personal motivation for violence can become blurred (Hobbs 2013; Windle 2018; Windle and Briggs 2015). Cultural, emotional or visceral motivations can be as, or more important, than financial ones. Indeed, that reputedly high-level

[3] Other consequences include an inability to recruit, or loss of, valuable investors, staff and subcontractors (see Windle 2018).

wholesalers and traffickers were willing to harm their business interests by feuding offers a challenge to depictions of such actors as economically rational.

Many U.K. and U.S. ethnographies portray violence as founded less on illicit markets and more in street culture (for example Anderson 1999; Densley 2013; McLean forthcoming). Here violence may be both economically and culturally rational: not only does attacking a rival prevent future victimisation (Anderson 1999; Windle 2013) but it communicates cultural goals of masculinity and status (Anderson 1999) which can facilitate the accumulation of what Sandberg and Pedersen (2011) term "street capital."

Subcultural violence is not, however, a prerequisite for all -- or even most -- drug markets. Actors in most localised drug markets do not see violence "as a normal way to resolve conflict" (Coomber 2015, 25). Indeed, Jacques and Wright's (2015) ethnography of middle-class American drug dealers describes status as being centred upon the avoidance of violence. Rather, the accumulation of street capital is important for those enmeshed in the street: economically deprived urban areas where alternative sources of income are scarce (Anderson 1999). In short, certain areas are "more likely to produce tool kits that promote violent and criminal responses" (Copes et al., 2015, 8) to challenges in any spheres of social interaction, from a debt (drug or otherwise) to a disrespectful comment or look. The rational trafficker may well want to avoid violence but, being raised in areas with violent subcultures, has been socialised to violently respond to perceived threats or insults.

The international literature suggests that systematic violence can only be a partial explanation for the three feuds discussed in this chapter. Zimring and Hawkins (1997) critique of systematic violence is useful here. They argue that drug markets are contingent causes of violence:

> … there is no iron law that illicit markets will generate a high body count … the creation and expansion of illegal markets will produce extra homicides when social circumstances conducive to lethal violence already exist. (Zimring and Hawkins 1997, 153; also, Currie 2016)

The following section will explore some of these circumstances. It will be argued that socio-economic and culture factors, coupled with the structure of Irish drug trafficking networks, are stronger factors for explaining feuding than systematic violence.

The Familial Structure of Irish Organized Crime

The structure of Irish organized crime may represent an important explanatory factor for the beginning, continuation and intensity of feuding. While there are a variety of drug dealing and trafficking structures in Ireland -- including independent entrepreneurs and looser social networks -- many gangs are organized around family lines (Hourigan et al., 2018). These are essentially wheel-networks in which a small number of core family members sit in the centre (see Connolly and Donovan 2014; Moran 2000), connected to a larger network of extended family, friends and business acquaintances. There were family connections in the South Dublin Feud, although this was less pronounced than the gangs involved in the Limerick and Transnational Feuds. Indeed, Detective Superintendent Tony Howard of the Gardaí Drugs and Organized Crime Bureau described the Transnational Feud as "split down along two families" (cited in Hilliard 2017).

Feuding, by definition, involves families, thus differentiating it from other types of systematic violence. The Oxford English Dictionary defines a feud as:

> A state of bitter and lasting mutual hostility; especially such a state between two *families*, tribes or individuals, marked by murderous assaults in revenge for some dreadful insult or wrong. (cited in Halsall 1999)

While violent conflict between those involved in the sale of drugs is common in many illicit markets in many different countries, the practice of feuding has a particularly prominent role in Ireland. It may be notable that gang and organized crime research and journalism in the U.K. and U.S. seldom use the term feud, preferring instead terms such as "war" or "beef." This may be attributed to the familial structure of Irish organized crime.

Colonialism not only inflated recourse to feuding but also solidified the cultural and emotional importance of the extended family as a locus of identity: families became important sources of

challenging British power and a criminal justice system perceived as fundamentally unjust and biased against the Catholic population (Hourigan et al., 2018; Lloyd 2000). This legacy of suspicion of, and lack of faith in, official criminal justice remained in some inner-city areas after Ireland achieved independence in 1922. Consequently, feuding practices continued (Hourigan et al., 2018).[4]

The importance of family identity was reinforced, since the 1960s, in poor areas by rapid social changes connected to deindustrialization and globalization. In Ireland, as in other countries, many of the established industries that provided meaningful (see Currie 2016) employment to the industrial working classes were closed. The occupational identities central to self-esteem and self-respect were eroded in these areas, and the honour and prestige of the extended family became even more important (Hourigan et al., 2018).

The status and prestige of the family is at the core of the tit-for-tat dynamic of feuding: the family on the receiving end of the attack must respond in order to preserve and inflate its status: "Each attack or killing places the other side in a position of 'debt,' until it is repaid by retaliatory violence" (Halsall 1999, 13). Or as Tomás, a relative of one of the Limerick gangs, reported to Hourigan (2011, 114): "we have to keep our side up the whole time, we can't let them get the upper hand on us."

Indeed, as Elijah Anderson (1999) reminds us, in many economically deprived areas, the creation and saving of respect becomes very important because it is such a rare, and thus valuable, commodity. A commodity that can be traded and that others may attempt to steal. However, where Limerick and Dublin differ from Anderson's Philadelphia, is that the status of the family may be more important than the status of the individual. In other words, for Irish traffickers, feuding may represent the familial accumulation of what Sandberg and Pedersen (2011) term "street capital."

While there are historical legacies and non-material motivations, feuding *is* a useful resource for criminal organizations, although it can be difficult at times to separate commercial and personal

[4] Outside of organized crime, feuding remains prevalent within the Irish Travelling community as a form of conflict resolution (Ní Shúinéir 2005).

motivations. The emotional and cultural benefits of feuding can merge with the instrumental to a point whereby there is little clear distinction. Hourigan (2011) shows how, in Limerick, the feuds were used to exert control over local communities where the gangs' criminal activities were based and feuding was sometimes used as justification for violence, when more financial objectives may have been the primary objective. Guy Halsall (1999) has suggested that, in feuds, all violent acts are strategical tools of communication. Feuds may bolster individual and family reputations for violence which can, in theory, deter victimisation from other criminals (Hobbs 2013; Marsh 2017; Windle 2013; Windle and Briggs 2015), prevent witnesses and victims from cooperating with the state and increase the cohesiveness of the group (Decker 1996; also Halsall 1999). Feuds also provide younger members of family networks an opportunity to accumulate street capital, which can increase access to entrepreneurial opportunities within illicit markets.

In short, initial acts of violence may have elements of enterprise -- i.e., they may be partly motivated by conflict over debts and markets -- intermingled with cultural or emotional motives. The continuation and intensity of many feuds are, however, rooted in historical suspicion and distrust of the state coupled with a fierce competition for family status.

Feuding and Subcultures of Violence

Ireland has, from the early 1960s, fully embraced globalization and neoliberalism, coming first in Foreign Policy's Globalization Index in 2001 and 2002 to gain the title of the "world's most global country." This was largely due to Ireland's embrace of neo-liberal policies and practices (combined with innovations in communication and information technology) (Yester 2009). The recurring boom-to-bust cycles of the Irish economy coupled with Ireland's love affair with neo-liberalism, however, undermined traditional working-class industries, weakened public services and greatly increased levels of precarious employment. By the 1990s, Ireland had one of Europe's most flexible labour regimes with low job security, substantially more workers on low wages and fewer workers' rights (O'Hearn 2003, 42). One consequence has been the development of urban areas with a high concentration of people who are unemployment or employed in insecure or meaningless jobs (Keohane and Kuhling 2014, O'Hearn 2003; Currie 2016).

Added to this, Ireland followed global patterns of consumerism with an increasing emphasis from the mid-1990s on buying high-status consumer goods. Here status and self-esteem became increasingly dependent on what the *family* could buy (Keohane and Kuhling 2014). Indeed, those families at the centre of feuds have aggressively promoted their conspicuous consumption (Hourigan 2011); as have the Irish media, a phenomena which will be discussed below.

Together, these developments have created an increasingly socially and economically disadvantaged working class who lack the skills to work within the new economy; at least in any way that is meaningful to them. They are, however, completely accepting of the consumerist dreams of late capitalism. That is, Irish consumer "culture promises what social structure cannot deliver -- success for all" (Messner and Rosenfield 2013, 53; Merton 1938). Many living in urban areas most heavily affected by these changes adapted by engaging in crime, especially drug dealing (Kilcommins et al., 2004; McCullagh 2011) and/or developing violent street cultures to express their masculinity (Hourigan 2011; Kelleher and O'Connor 2011; Marsh 2017). Such cultures require violent responses over perceived challenges (Anderson 1999), regardless of whether the violence is profitable or not.

For example, the Limerick Feud was centred upon a small number of housing estates that were some "of the most deprived, not only in the city of Limerick, but also on the island of Ireland" (Devereux et al., 2012:502). These estates' unemployment rate was five times the national average, had one of the country's highest percentages of public housing, high-rates of single-parent families and "educational attainment well below the national norm" (Fitzgerald 2017, 4).

While the Transnational Feud has involved violence in Spain and possibly elsewhere, many of the associates of these two gangs are spread out across a small number of areas in Dublin's north inner city and southern suburbs: suburban areas where the South Dublin Feud played out a decade earlier. There has historically been significantly higher unemployment rates in these southern suburban areas than the national average (Loughran and McCann 2006; Nolan et al., 2000). The north inner city, in 2011, experienced male unemployment levels at "double and triple the national average" (Mulvey 2017, 10). Both the north inner city and these particular southern suburbs

continue to be designated as disadvantaged areas, with some pockets being "very disadvantaged" (RTE 2018; Mulvey 2017).

Elliot Currie (2016) has argued that social exclusion and the lack of *meaningful* employment explain why violence tends to be concentrated in relatively small geographical areas. This violence is often "an assertion, sometimes a desperate one, of self, and a demand for respect and recognition" (Currie 2016, 6).

The previous section suggested that Irish feuds are grounded in, and facilitated by, a historical context. This section has, so far, argued that neo-liberal social and economic policies, deindustrialisation, the rise of precarious and meaningless employment, coupled with the rising strain of consumerism, has created the conditions in which "hard-men" battle for the prestige and respect of their family.

The Transnational Feud may, however, challenge the explanation of feuding as based in sub-cultures originating in economically disadvantaged areas. Bearing in mind we have little reliable or sufficiently in-depth information on the backgrounds of key actors, the media have reported that many of those caught up in the feud have skilled or semi-skilled jobs, and are relatively affluent by the standards of their communities. Some are reportedly the children of successful entrepreneurs (both licit and illicit) living in affluent areas.

Two points are relevant here. First, subcultural explanations of violence downplay individual factors. As only a very small number of those living in these economically deprived areas decide to engage in feuding (or entrepreneurial drug dealing) there are likely deeper psychological factors and family dynamics at play.[5] Second, it may be that violent subcultural values and norms are formed in earlier generation's experience of disadvantage and get passed down through some families and/or within some areas, transcending current financial situations. This may echo Robert Lombardo's (2018) observation that "racket subcultures" developed in Chicago and New York's

[5] Considering the difficulty of collecting in-depth biographical data from those involved in the feud, these psychosocial factors may never be adequately explained.

slums during the 1950s, in response to a lack of legitimate opportunity and discrimination yet continued to hold sway as these neighbours became more affluent.

Consequences of Gangland Violence

Forensic psychologist Jane Wood has documented how involvement in gang violence can cause post-traumatic stress (PTSD) (Wood and Dennard 2017). Hourigan (2011) witnessed what appears to be PTSD manifesting itself in Limerick. One mother described how her son never relaxes, he's always "watchin out, watin for the next thing." He worries more about his own crowd than the opposition' (Hourigan 2011). While Tadhg, who grew up in a feuding family said:

> I'm always waitin' for the next thing. I keep my eyes peeled. I always know what's goin' on and I'm keepin' an eye out all the time … I'd like a break. I can't go anywhere. I can't leave the house. I can't have a normal life and sometimes I'd like that. (Hourigan 2011)

Consequences for Families Connected to the Feud

The children of feuding families can also be victimised. Not only have young children witnessed violence against family members -- including a grenade attack on a family home in which a six-year-old child was sleeping (Examiner 2008) -- but family members uninvolved in the feud are impacted by the stigma attached to their family name. As Jim reported:

> If your name is Red or Blue, there is no point in you going down to the community centre or the crèche or the youth club looking for help. They don't want to know about you. (Hourigan 2011)

Recent studies on adverse childhood experience demonstrate that a combination of negative experiences, including witnessing or experiencing violence, can increase the risk of being both a victim and perpetrator of violence, as well as developing harmful drug consuming patterns and various physical and mental health issues, and early mortality, across the life-course (Dube et al., 2003). As such, the longer-term impact of the feuds may be a generation of young people -- born

into stressful and traumatic environments and excluded from pro-social supports -- at risk of growing into adults more willing to engage in violence, drug consumption and trading. These risks may also apply to children living in the locality, which will be discussed below.

Consequences for Communities

Many innocent people, unconnected to feuding families, have been caught in the crossfire. For example, in 2016, a Dublin City Council worker was murdered in front of his wife and three young children in Majorca. He had been mistaken for a relative of a member of a feuding family who was "not considered a serious criminal" (Schiller 2016). Also in 2016, in another case of mistaken identity, a man was shot outside a Dublin pub. Father Derek Farrell reported that he was:

> An innocent man, a homeless man, a man doing his best to overcome personal adversity, a family man, a daddy, a fiancé, a young 24-year-old Traveller man. (cited in Lally 2016b)

The Limerick Feud also resulted in the deaths of innocent people. For example, in 2008, a local rugby player was shot and killed. This was again a case of mistaken identity (Lally 2009).

Community Violence and Fear

The psychological impact of feuding, as discussed above with reference to family members, may also extend to those children living on the estates in which feuds play out. A child psychologist described how some children in Limerick were experiencing as much trauma as children living in Gaza, while a teacher described how her children were too traumatized to participate in school, and became disruptive in class (Hourigan 2011). For example, in 2016, an assassin fired six shots into the family home of an innocent member of a feuding family based in Dublin. This was during the afternoon as children played in the street (Grant et al., 2016).

Feuding can also contribute to the stigmatisation of neighbourhoods at the centre of the feuds. For example, Limerick was commonly referred to as the "murder capital of Europe" (Devereux et al., 2012) and "stab city" by both the national and international media, and amongst the Irish public. In 2007, the British Guardian newspaper printed an article titled "Hard Times in Stab City" that

reported "youths wearing bullet-proof vests and equipped with machine guns and hand grenades" (Bowcott 2007). While Diarmuid Martin, Archbishop of Dublin, noted that the Transnational Feud was stigmatising inner-city Dublin:

> Children who grow up in areas should be proud of the area they come from and they're finding their area is being presented day after day as the Wild West. (TV3 2018)

The stigmatization of an area can "have a profound effect on the life chances, experiences and self-image of those who live in neighbourhoods" (Devereux et al., 2012, 501). Indeed, residents of the estates in which the Limerick Feud centred reported to Devereux and colleagues (2015) and Hourigan (2011) that living in the estate resulted in them being denied access to services ranging from taxis into the estate to mortgages, insurance coverage, jobs and even their children attending certain schools (see also Fitzgerald 2007; in Dublin, City Wide 2018). As Eileen reported:

> My son went for a job cleaning a warehouse … the supervisor was really nice and interviewed him and gave him the job. Then he asked him to fill out all these forms. When he saw the address he made a face. A few minutes later, he came back and told him that the boss had given the job to someone else. (Hourigan 2011)

For those living in the immediate vicinity, the feuds may be a source of debilitating fear: whether fear originating from exaggerated media coverage, as residents of south Dublin reported to Loughran and McCann (2006), due to proximity to actual conflict and/or witnessing armed police patrolling their streets. Either way, according to Archbishop Diarmuid Martin, people in the north inner-city areas where feuds have played out are "living in fear" (TV3 2018).

Decades of research demonstrates that fear of crime can have a severely limiting impact on individual mobility and strongly influence the individual's overall sense of psychological security in their home and local neighbourhood (Foster and Giles-Corti 2008). Heightened fear of crime

can have wider economic impacts on neighbourhoods as members of local populations may be reluctant to venture into what are perceived as "feuding" areas for recreation or consumption-based activities (Ross and Jang 2000). A government report noted that stigmatisation had indeed impacted commercial activity in Limerick City:

> The scale of the criminal, social, and economic problems … is not only a blight on the communities but also on the people that must live there, but left unchecked, could pose a real threat to commercial and social life in Limerick city as a whole. (Fitzgerald 2007, 7)

Consequences beyond the Local Community

The fear of feuding, and more general fear of systematic violence, can be heightened and exaggerated by the media to a point that increases fear amongst those geographically and socially detached from the feuds. The Irish media have long exaggerated Ireland's level of violent crime, especially considering the relatively low levels of recorded homicide (see Figure 1). Ciaran McCullagh's (1996, 10) observations about the Irish media remain pertinent today:

> The media gives a higher level of coverage of crime than it warrants and tends to emphasize crimes of violence rather than the more common crimes against property. As a result, levels of fear of crime are higher than they should be. (McCullagh 1996, 10)

For example, one of Ireland's most popular crime journalists depicts a country gripped by professional violence against a nostalgic backdrop:

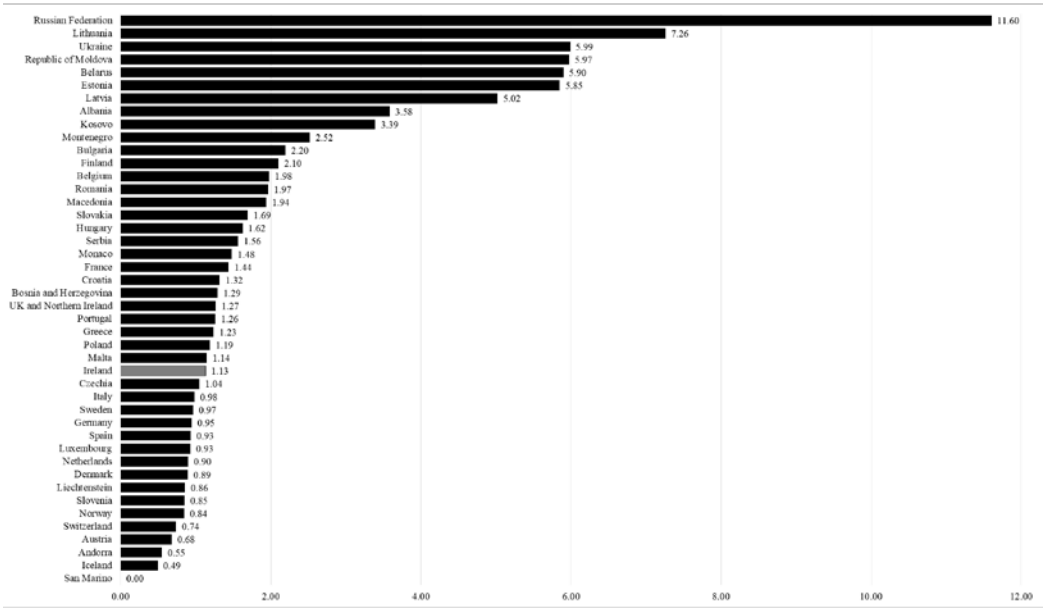
> … gangland murders have become an almost acceptable reality in our cities and major towns… The spectre of the hit man now stalks many Irish streets where once there was no problem with serious crime. (Williams 2011, 449)[6]

[6] The portrayal of organized crime as becoming more violent is, however, neither new nor confined to Ireland (see Windle et al., 2017).

Or in the Irish Times (2018):

> A central element in that [Hutch-Kinahan feud] is the drugs trade … Life has become cheap … In the drug trade, murder begets murder.

While feuding has had a significant, negative impact on individuals and communities, Ireland remains a relatively peaceful and safe country: Ireland's 12-year average homicide rate of 1.13 per 100,000 is more or less on par with its European neighbours, half the European average (2.2:100,000), significantly lower than many Eastern European states and a tenth of the Russian homicide rate (Figure 1).



Source: Adapted from UN Office of Drugs and Crime (2013).

Figure 1. European homicide rates per 100,000 of population (2003-2015 average).

The association between feuding and drug markets has another outcome of increasing the fear and stigmatisation of stereotypical (i.e., working class) drug dealers and drug consumers. While the majority of drug dealers avoid violence, news stories about peaceful drug dealers are not particularly newsworthy. The extensive coverage of violence within a small number of Ireland's most economically disadvantaged areas exaggerates not only the level of violence within the

country, but also the level of violence within Irish drug markets. The perceived association between violence and drugs can, together with other stigma attached to being a drug user (City Wide 2018), erect significant barriers to accessing voluntary treatment, harm reduction and healthcare services, and promote risky drug consumption patterns.

Some media outlets have glorified drug dealing. Feuds are followed as if they were soap operas, and drug dealers and traffickers are made into quasi-celebrities. Stories abound of the wealth that traffickers have accumulated and the glamorous lives they lead. One story focused on the son of a suspected gang member going to a party attended by Premier League soccer players and other celebrities (Cotter 2018). As the son has never been implicated in criminal activity, this is an example of both the stigmatisation of the family and the glamorisation of crime. Other headlines have included:

> Cartel gangster living in €500,000 U.K. mansion as court battle looms. (Tallant 2018)

> Flush with cash: Suspected mob member's luxury bathroom revealed as plush mansion is targeted by Criminal Assets Bureau in rural crime gang crackdown: We can also reveal how every skirting board in the home was made from granite at a cost of €100,000. (Breen 2017)

As such, a consequence not of the feuds but of the reporting of feuds is that vulnerable young people, with little legitimate avenues for material success and early experiences of trauma, may be influenced by the trappings of consumer culture illuminated by the media.

Conclusion

The first half of this chapter explored the causes of feuding within and around Irish drug markets. The chapter placed the foundation of feuding in a historical context of colonialism, augmented by a subcultural response to economic deprivation. Together these historical and social process have

forged a particular familial structure of Irish organized crime which influences the dynamic of violence.

Feuding is not a natural outcome of drug markets, nor is systematic violence more generally. Rather both feuding and systematic violence are concentrated in areas which suffered a decline in traditional working class jobs, at a time of increased pressure to exhibit the trappings of the financial success of the family. Many of the key actors in the most recent feud appear, however, to already enjoy a level of monetary success. As such, it may be that violent subcultures are transgenerational. Further psychosocial research is required to fully understand subjective causes explaining why only a small number of families engage in feuding.

The second half of the chapter identified some of the significant psychological, physical and social harms which have inflicted family members involved in the feuds, local communities and the Republic of Ireland itself. It has been suggested that the longer-term impact of these feuds may be felt when children who are raised in these contexts, experience multiple forms of trauma, and grow into adults themselves in the absence of pro-social supports.

Some consideration needs to be given to responsible media coverage of the feuds. Many Irish crime correspondents should be commended: They are well informed, well intentioned and courageous in their reporting of feuding. Some outlets are, however, more sensationalist and all are confided by a business model that requires the presentation of newsworthy stories; and feuding is very newsworthy. The media are, of course, also implicated in promoting the consumerism that partially contributes to the strain that is driving illicit drug markets (see Messner and Rosenfield, 2013).

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